

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

August 10, 2020

Secretary Perdue:

We want to thank you and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for working tirelessly alongside state and federal agencies to investigate the unsolicited packages of seeds that Americans across the country are receiving that appear to be from China. While we understand that this matter is still under investigation, and early evidence indicates this to be a "brushing scam," we encourage USDA to take seriously the potential risks associated with the illegal entry of these seeds as the agency carries out its security and bioterrorism preparedness efforts.

Whether or not commercial or geopolitical motives drove the distribution of these seeds, they have the potential to cause severe damage to the value of our nation's agricultural production, the environment, and overall national security. For these reasons, the United States must not dismiss the potential for another country to try its hand at agricultural terrorism to hinder the United States' ability to produce a safe and sustainable supply of food here at home.

Therefore, we urge USDA to continue collaborating with all relevant agencies to develop a plan of action to improve the detection of potential bioterrorism threats, ensure trade compliance, and put a stop to agriculture smuggling. We also encourage USDA to continue their work with State departments of agriculture to explore best practices for educating American consumers and agricultural producers on how to respond appropriately to future threats.

We appreciate your hard work to ensure the continued health, welfare, and value of our Nation's agriculture and natural resources. We stand committed with USDA during this effort and lend our support in defending the future of American agriculture and national security.

Sincerely,



Jodey C. Arrington
Member of Congress

Cc:
Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, USTR
Secretary Chad Wolf, DHS
Attorney General William Barr, DOJ

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